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The Diptheria.

The diptheria, now so prevalent and so fatal in several parts of the United States, is what is called, in medical nomenclature, an epidemic; that is to say, a disease produced by causes existing in the atmosphere, and attacking at the same time a large number of persons. That the cause of epidemic disease is in the atmosphere, and enters the human system in a state of intermixture with it, is a point upon which, we believe, physiologists have ceased to dispute; but what is the nature of the cause, and how it can exist in the atmosphere and yet evade the most minute and laborious research, are matters that still remain surrounded by doubt and disagreement.

Causes of disease invading the human system from without, must in character belong to one of the two great classes into which all material things are divided; they must be either organic or inorganic; either containing or not containing in themselves the principle of life. In case they are organic, their intermixture with the atmosphere must be mechanical merely—they float in it as a foreign substance; in case they are inorganic, their intermixture with the atmosphere is necessarily chemical—they form, for the time, one of its constituent parts, this being the only known condition upon which they would remain.

Inorganic substances in combination with the air would, however minute their proportion, be readily detected by chemical analysis. Their effect would be, like that of poisons in general, to corrode the tissues with which they come in contact, and produce death by a dissolution of the parts to which vital functions are entrusted. Organic substances intermixed with the air, would be likely to lodge in localities favorable to their development, and to reproduce themselves in a mass of parasitic vegetation: the effect of which would be either to obstruct the vital functions and invite death directly, or by projecting their roots into the tissues, to beget inflammation, gangrene and decay.

If there is any point that appears to be incontrovertibly settled in chemistry, it is that the air undergoes no alteration in its constituent parts, either in respect to materials or quantities. It is always made up of the same elements, and in the same proportions. The air of the atmosphere never changes, never becomes corrupt or adulterated. The most laborious tests, applied in times of the most violent epidemics, have utterly failed to detect the smallest degeneracy. Chemically, it is always pure, perfect and wholesome. It is fair to presume, therefore, that when it becomes otherwise, it is by casual intermixtures of things with which it refuses to combine—with germs or monads of organic matter—and this is the lesson which the revelations of the microscope is gradually bringing to the knowledge of mankind.

Whether there is, at this extreme point of research, where the powers of the microscope almost fail to penetrate, any difference between animal and vegetable—or rather whether any of the recognized distinctions between the two provinces into which organic life is commonly distributed, exist in such a manner as to be detectable—we do not know; but we prefer to treat the cause of atmospheric disease as vegetable rather than animal, for several reasons. No animal, so far as is known, taken into the system, is dangerous to health by the production of a specific malady; and the appearance of the phenomena in the part affected by epidemic parasites is more like that of vegetable than of animal life. We can not get over the idea—although it is, in some sort, a mistaken one—that the power of individual locomotion is inseparable from animal existence.

There is a class of vegetation, parasitic in its character, minute in its proportions—demanding in some of its members the utmost power of the microscope for its detection—whose germs, there is reason to believe, float unseen in the atmosphere, small beyond the power of the imagination to comprehend, numberless in variety, and in some of which are stored the ability to inflict almost infinite injury upon the human race. Not strictly speaking poisons — originating no direct corrosion of the parts in which they effect a lodgment — they enter into the system, and in the process of germination, growth, and reproduction, produce local disturbances which either become or appear to become, general. To this cause we may attribute the existence of the terrible catalogue of epidemic and malarious diseases, with which humanity has been scourged as far back as history contains any record—plagues, choleras, scarletinas, intermittents, influenzas, goitres, milk sicknesses: even the pulmonary consumption, when it assumes—as it some times does—the form of a contagion, gives evidence which leads to the suspicion that it sprang originally from the same prolific source with the others.

Of the laws that govern these winged arrows of death, or the conditions under which they are produced, little is known; though of some more than of others. Some are annual and affect only particular localities; others at long, and perhaps irregular intervals carry sickness and death over the entire globe. Some make their appearance at particular seasons of the year, others pursue their terrible march irrespective of heat, cold or prevailing winds—as deadly amid the snows of a Russian winter as during the torrid summer-heats of the plains of Hindostan. Some hover over the marshes, and visit with sickness those who dwell upon their borders; some spring from the damp defiles of rocky mountains, stealing forth now and then, like a band of assassins from their gloomy fastnesses; and some in the form of the ruddy simoom sweep over the burning desert, overtaking the traveler and closing up the avenues of life in an instant.

Diptheria, now somewhat prevalent in this vicinity, is one of this class of diseases. When fatal, it produces its effects in several ways, by filling up the windpipe with a parasitic growth resembling a thickened membrane, or by obstructing with a similar growth the functions of some other part, thereby overloading the system until it succumbs beneath the burden. Such is the substance of the testimony derived from post-mortem examinations, and it is probably correct.

Whenever an epidemic disease is in its progress, it is probable that few escape invasion by its germs; and yet, in general, few in proportion to the whole are made seriously ill by them. In proportion to its vitality and healthy action the system resists the force of the attack. Children, persons with delicate constitutions, or whose health has been undermined by disease or dissipation, are most likely to suffer; while adults, especially those in middle-life and in robust health, will escape, or if attacked by the force of their vital action, will soon overcome the morbid influence.

In respect to treatment, it would seem to be plainly indicated by the nature of the complaint. When seated, it is simply a trial of strength between the disease and the constitution: will the latter overcome the former, or will it hold out until it has run its course? Specific remedies—medicines to cure—it is evident, are out of the question. Local applications have, so far, not answered the purpose. The true object of treatment is to sustain and build up the system, that it may retain strength to resist the force of the disease. Cathartics, except of a gentle character, to remove pre-existing obstructions from other causes, should be avoided. A generous diet, such as experience has shown is best suited to the taste and general health of the patient, with such aids, tonic or stimulant as may be used without weaking the activity or taxing the strength of the digestive organs: this, with good nursing, is nearly the sum of the therapeutic agencies of use in the disease.

Just as the Gazette Expected.

When Judge Williams's insane or knavish dispatch from Kansas first arrived, the *Gazette* wanted the Federal Administration to let slip the dogs of war at once, and hang, slay and quarter promiscuously. It said:

"We trust the Administration will show an unwonted vigor in putting down these assailants. Let them suffer the extreme penalties of the law, like all other perpetrators of treason and murder."

Yesterday it congratulated itself on its intuitive insight of the case as follows:

"As we suspected, the first reports of the Kansas outbreak are greatly exaggerated. Some of the chief items of the excited narrative of the fugitive Federal Judge, are already shown to be purely imaginative. At the last accounts no attack had been made on Fort Scott, nor, of course, had the court or land-office records been meddled with. The frightened Judge has started a panic as groundless as the uses made of it by unscrupulous Democratic journals are dishonest and reckless."

When the New York *Herald* announces something directly the reverse of all its predictions and statements, it always begins with, "As we expected," or "As we stated." It is pleasant to see the orthodox *Gazette* imitating the cavorting of "the Satanic press."

The affection which brought the *Gazette* into this little predicament was a fear, as stated in its first announcement, that the Montgomery performance would be charged to the election of Lincoln, and would damage the Republican party. Therefore it wanted to take the wind out of this by calling for vengeance on Montgomery, who, so far as reliable accounts show, has done nothing requiring Federal intervention. It is a heavy load upon a public journal to have a party to take care of. In its fear and flounderings to that end, it is incapable of doing justice, and is just as likely to strike out at its friends as at its opponents. A party paper is fearfully and wonderfully made.

Female Justice.

Justice is represented blind, but she always keeps her eyes wide open to the frailties of her own sex. Last week a frail woman in New York was sentenced by Judge Russell to the penitentiary for one year, for an attempt at larceny, to which she plead guilty. She said that she had gone with the complainant—whose name is not even mentioned, so blind is Justice to masculine failings—and that he refused to pay her; therefore, she seized the watch as a means of enforcing payment. She was willing to make any plea that was proper, and, as she had never been arrested before, hoped to be lightly sentenced.

Doctors have a way of changing the disease in a patient by substituting one which they know how to treat, for another which is beyond their skill. Thus a chronic complaint may be driven off by an acute disease which yields to known treatment. It was on this plan that a celebrated physician sought to turn every case of disease into fits, as he was "death on fits." A similar practice might be introduced into criminal matters. This woman might have killed a man in New York for a lighter penalty. If, after she had seized the watch, she had changed the crime into murder, she would have brought it within mild treatment.

Atlantic for December.

This magazine is at hand with its usual attractive burden. The list of contents is, The United States and the Barbary States; Sunshine; The Two Tongues; Midsummer and May; Epithalmia; Arthur Hallam; The Confessions of a Medium; John Andre and Honora Sneyd; We shall Rise Again; The Professor's Story; and A Plea for Freedom from Speech and Figures of Speech Makers; besides the usual Reviews and Literary Notices.

Under the present publishers the *Atlantic* has not only maintained the high character which it assumed at the start, but has increased its attractions. The publishers announce more extensive arrangements for the year beginning January, among which are a new novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe, one by Charles Reade, and contributions by Longfellow, Hawthorne, Holmes, Lowell, Emerson, Whittier, Giles, Mrs. Fanny Kemble, and a long array of the best writers in America.

INVENTION FOR ETCHING ON STONE.—An invention has been brought forward, the object of which is to do away with some well-known defects in the ordinary method of etching stone. The principal defect in this method is founded in the fact, that the operator can never know, with certainty, the depth of the lines, and he can only guess the same by the strength of the acid which he employs, by the time which said acid remains on the stone, and by the nature and chemical composition of the stone itself. Another difficulty is caused by the continual stopping out of the finished parts, which completely prevents the artisan from seeing the progress of his picture. His memory is his only guide, and on this account he is liable to be confused and misled. Furthermore, the gradation from one tint to the other will always be more or less visible, showing by decided marks the previous covering with acid. All these difficulties are avoided simply by using some acid which forms an insoluble combination with the lines of the lithographic stone, such as citric acid, which, after being washed off with water, leaves a very small quantity of a white powder, viz: citrate of lime, in the lines, which enables the operator to judge accurately of their respective strength by the contrast they form with the dark covering of the stone. The pictures produced by this process resemble steel engravings very closely, and their effect in shade and light is equal in every respect to the latter.

LATEST BY TELEGRAPH.

The Recent Gale on the Lakes.

OSWEGO, November 26.—Accounts of the severe gale on Saturday and Sunday are coming in from every quarter.

The schooner *J. J. Morley* is ashore near Kingston, and the *Game Cock* at Peninsular Point. The *Minnehaha* dragged both anchors and is ashore near Cape Vincent.

The *Margarette* is ashore near Nelson's Island.

Over thirty vessels, bound to this port, are still to arrive. Weather moderating slowly.

SACKETT'S HARBOR, November 26.—Two vessels are ashore at Stony Creek, and one in Henderson, names unknown; also, one vessel between Horse Island and Stony Island, with the signal of distress flying.

OSWEGO, November 26.—The schooner *Forest* is frozen in near Trenton. *Cascade* driven to Sackett's Harbor disabled and sails gone. *Jennie Mack* ashore ten miles below Port Colburne. *Mary Silliva* ashore in Channout Bay. Schooner *Comet* ashore near Big Sodus. *Queen City* at Kingston, boat lost, sails ribboned. Propeller *Castor* ashore below Stone Mills, gone to pieces. *Augustus Handy* in Smith Bay, one boat gone; leaking badly. Seven vessels are ashore between Kingston and Sackett's Harbor. A blinding snow-storm from the south-east is now prevailing here.

Later from the Isthmus and South America.

NEW YORK, November 26.—Advices from Panama by the *Ariel*, state that the cargo of the American brig *Winthrop* had been seized at Santa Marta, by the commissary of the General Government, and appropriated to the troops and public.

Wm. C. Foster, an American citizen, had been arrested for going from Carthagena to Santa Marta, without a passport, though he had one from the American Consul.

Two boxes of specie, containing $5,000, belong to citizens, were seized at Santa Marta, and are still in the possession of the General Government.

The news from Peru is to the effect that Mr. Clay, United States Minister, had received his passport, and would leave on the 12th of October for Panama and New York. Diplomatic intercourse is thus suspended with Peru.

The advices from other parts of South America are about of the usual character.

An attempt to find a railroad route across the Chiriqui Isthmus is said to be a total failure.

River News.

PITTSBURG, November 26—M.—River six feet one inch by the pier-mark, a rise of one inch since Saturday night. Weather cloudy and milder with indications of snow.

PITTSBURG, November 26—P. M.—The river is six feet one inch, and at a stand. Raining.

LOUISVILLE, November 26—P. M.—The river is falling, with five feet eight inches water in the canal. It has been rainy during the day and is now raining fast.

North Carolina News.

PETERSBURG, VA., November 26.—Senator Clingman has been renominated by the Democratic caucus at Raleigh, North Carolina, for Senator. Hon. M. E. Manly was elected Supreme Court Judge by the Legislature of North Carolina on Saturday. There was considerable talk among the members of secession.

Railroad Collision.

NEW YORK, November 26.—a collision occurred on Friday night, at Fordham, between two freight trains, one of which had a passenger car attached. Daniel D. Kelly was severely injured internally, and his recovery is doubtful. Several other passengers and a brakesman were somewhat hurt.

New York Market.

NEW YORK, November 26—P. M.—Ashes nominal at $5 25 for Pots and Pearls.

Cotton less active, and a shade lower: sales of 1,200 bales at 10½c. for middling Uplands.

Flour transactions are to a moderate extent, and prices generally without important change: sales of 15,200 brls, at $4 75@4 40 for superfine State; $5@5 20 for extra State; $4 70@5 for superfine Western; $5 3@5 40 for common to medium extra Western; $5 30@5 40 for good shipping brands extra round-hoop Ohio. Canadian in very moderate request: sales of 5,000 brls, at $5 10@6 75 for common to good extra. Rye Flour selling slowly at $3 40@4 10 for common to choice superfine. Corn-meal in moderate request; prices without striking change.

Whisky in moderate request at steady prices: sales of 600 brls, at 20@20½c.

Wheat opened quiet and closed with a moderate demand for export, at full previous prices: sales of 30,000 bushels Chicago spring at $1 09@1 12, the latter price for No. 1; 1,600 bushels Northwestern club, at $1 13@1 15; 5,800 bushels Milwaukie club, at $1 15@1 17; 13,700 bushels winter red Western, at $1 27@1 28; 1,700 bushels amber Wisconsin, at $1 17@1 18, the latter for very choice; 8,000 bushels white Michigan, at $1 35; 8,000 bushels white Indiana, at $1 38; 4,000 bushels white Kentucky, at $1 40@1 42½; 5,000 bushels choice red Tennessee, at $1 32½. Rye quiet, with sales of 2,500 bushels at 70c. Barley less freely offered, and may be quoted firm: sales of 2,800 bushels State. The supply of Corn afloat is limited, and with a fair demand, prices have advanced 1c. per bushel: sales of 49,000 bushels at 66@67c. for mixed Western, afloat, nearly all at the inside price, and 66@72c for white—Oats firmer and in better request: sales to a fair extent, at 37@38c. for Western and Canada, and 38@38½c. for State.

Hops dull: sales of 120 bales at 24@35c.

New Hides dull, at 24@25½c; Buenos Ayres, $1 25; Rio Grande, 17@18c. for dry Western.

Pork opened with an increased firmness for both mess and prime, and closed quiet: sales of 485 barrels at $17@17 75 for mess; $12 25 for prime. The Beef market continues dull and unchanged: sales of 2,300 barrels at $8 50@16 for repacked mess; $10 50@11 for extra mess. Prime mess Beef and Beef Hams are dull and nominally unchanged. Cut Meats dull and nominal at 7¾@7¾c. for Shoulders, and 10@10¼c. for Hams. Dressed Hogs firm at 7¾@7¾c. Bacon quiet. The Lard market is dull with a very limited supply: sales of 125 barrels at 11¾@11¾c. for prime city; 12@12¾c. for Western.

Butter selling at 10@15c. for Ohio, and 14@21c. for State. Cheese steady at 8@10½c. for inferior to prime.

Coffee—market continues very quiet, with only small sales to report at about previous quotations. Sugar is still very dull, but a little more active: sales 340 hogsheads Cuba at 5¾@5¾c. and 120 boxes Havana on private terms. Rice dull and lower: sales 80 tierces at 3¾@4c. cash. Molasses dull and heavy: we only hear of sales of 105 barrels at 38@40c.

Seed steady and declining: sales 2,000 bags new Clover at 9@9¼c.

RIVER NEWS.

The Ohio, opposite this port, continues receding, having declined, during the twenty-four hours ending last evening, some ten inches, leaving a channel-depth of about twelve and a half feet at this point. Last evening the water was falling more slowly here, and at Pittsburg the river was gradually declining.

The weather was very inclement yesterday; and the temperature being much lower than on Sunday, and moderating as the day advanced. Night before last, snow fell for several hours, but yesterday morning it began to rain and continued all day, and is still descending at this hour.

Business on the Landing was very dull, and no freight of consequence was offering to any point. The unusual quietness there was partially owing, we presume, to the detestable weather and the wretched condition of the Wharf, which continued lined with steamers.

Saturday's Louisville *Courier* observes:

The river was falling fast yesterday, with six feet two inches water in the Canal, by the mark in the evening. Since our last report it had receded six inches at the head of the Falls and some eighteen inches at Portland. The weather, Friday evening, turned very cold after the snow-storm, and Saturday was the coldest day of the season. It was fully as cold as any day last winter, the thermometer in the country falling to 4° below zero. Yesterday was still very cold, and ice was freely made, but it moderated materially in the evening.

On the Falls, last evening, there were scant four and a half feet water in the pass or dug chute, and the new National. Capt. Montgomery's clipper for Red River, descended the Falls in fine style.

The Tecumseh had steam up yesterday preparatory to a turn back to Cincinnati to repair. A hole had been knocked in her bottom. The Champion No. 4, with a portion of the freight, accompanies her.

Mr. Woods, clerk of the Dove, reports the Leslie Combs in a crippled condition below Frankfort. She broke a shaft and cylinder-head on Thursday.

We learn from the officers of the last boats that have arrived from New Orleans that the political excitement among the people of all classes in that city, Natchez, and other places is intense, and threats of violence and mob-law against any officer of a Southern-trade boat who had voted for Lincoln for President were common.

In the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois Rivers there is no change worthy of mention.

STEAMBOAT REGISTER.

Arrivals—Sunday—Superior, Louisville; Magnolia, Maysville; Reliance, Pittsburg; Key West No. 2, do.; Swallow, do.; Great Western, New Orleans; Fannie McBurnie, Marietta; Poland, Nashville; Allen Collier, Red River. Monday—Telegraph, Louisville; Forest Queen, Madison; Universe, New Orleans; St. Cloud, New Orleans; Economy, St. Louis; Emma Duncan, do; Glendale, Memphis; Liberty, Wheeling; Dunleith, Neville; Eugene, Dock.

Departures—Sunday—Superior, Louisville; Key West No. 2, Louisville; Moses — Telegraph, Louisville; Magnolia, Maysville; Forest Queen, Madison; Dunleith, Neville; Fanny McBurnie, Marietta; Reliance, Pittsburg; Economy, Pittsburg; St. Cloud, do.; Lady Pike, Memphis; Stephen Decatur, New Orleans; Jesse K. Bell, Dock.

DIED.

BROADWELL.—November 26, 1860, of inflammation of the brain, Samuel A., son of M. L. and Susan Broadwell, aged 22 years.

Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend. The funeral will take place from the family residence, Seventeenth Ward, East Front-street, No. 1,484, at 1 o'clock this (Tuesday) afternoon. [Chargs Times.]

JEFFERIES.—On Monday morning, November 26, Mrs. Mary Jefferies, wife of the late John C. Jefferies, deceased, and daughter of G. Vanausdal, Esq.

Friends are invited to attend her funeral from her late residence, No. 535 Freeman-street, north of Poplar, to-morrow (Wednesday) morning, 28th inst., at 9 o'clock.